

REMARKS

The present invention has been carefully studied and amended in view of the outstanding Office Action dated March 22, 2007, and reconsideration of that Action is requested in view of the following comments.

A petition for a one-month extension of time accompanies this response together with the appropriate fee. Accordingly, the deadline for responding to the Office Action has been extended until July 23, 2007 (July 22 being a Sunday), and this response is therefore timely filed since it was deposited in the mail for First Class Delivery Service on the date certified on the front page hereof.

The specification has been amended to include several subheadings where appropriate. These changes are in response to the objection to the disclosure as set forth in paragraph three of the outstanding Action.

Claim 3 has been canceled and the rejection thereof under 35 USC §112 is no longer an issue.

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims herein define subject matter which is neither shown nor suggested by the prior art taken alone or combination with one another. Specifically, these claims are not rendered obvious by Kondo et al Japanese Patent Application HO3-145485 ("Kondo") taken alone or in combination with the secondary prior art noted in the Action.

All of the claims herein recite either process or apparatus for preparing trioxane from aqueous formaldehyde solutions in the presence of acidic catalysts. It is significant that the formaldehyde solution used as a starting solution is mixed with a side

stream from the bottom of the reaction column, and thereafter that mixture is fed to the upper section of the reaction column via a tubular reactor.

These critical features are not disclosed or suggested by Kondo, or the secondary references combined with Kondo. The secondary references are merely directed to other features of the invention recited in the claims. Kondo is significantly different in that this reference teaches feeding a formaldehyde solution directly to the distillation column, totally unlike the claimed invention herein.

Accordingly, since Kondo fails to disclose or suggest the above described feature recited in all of the claims, and further because the secondary references relied upon by the Examiner do not address this particular feature, it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance, and early notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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